MOMAVET



Definition of the Competence Set for the Albanian VET Mobility Manager

2

September 2023





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1. Executive summary

The personal and professional well-being and development of the European citizens is one of the core objectives and strategies of the European Union. Internationalization and, particularly mobility, strategies within educational institutes are the key mechanisms that permit people across Europe and beyond to meet and learn from each other. Traditionally linked with higher education, Erasmus+ mobility projects have been expanded to the Vocational Education and Training sector, gaining more and more ground as a percentage out of the total number of mobility projects organized in all subsectors. Particularly important for European countries in an accession process, mobility projects are highly beneficial for VET learners and staff in Albania.

To be able to efficiently implement its national strategy on the implementation of KA1 Erasmus+ projects, the country needs trained experts for the preparation and implementation of these mobility initiatives. This is the scope of MoMAVET project.

This document illustrates the Competence Set that is required for the Albanian VET Teachers and Staff who will be trained to become Mobility Managers, enhancing, organizing and implementing the European internationalization and mobility strategies that will allow Albanian VET Learners to benefit from the participation of EU mobility projects abroad.

To design a targeted course that will address the needs of the Albanian VET Teachers in their effort to become Mobility Managers, we designed this framework that provides an analysis of:

- The profile, tasks and responsibilities of a Mobility Manager
- The methodology for the development of the Competence Set
- The detailed list of the required Competences that a VET Manager should have in order to be able to perform their duties efficiently
- Selection criteria and basic requirements for VET Teachers who would like to participate in MoMAVET training course and become the first group of Mobility Managers in the country.



2. Project background

The MoMAVET project focuses on the Albanian Vocational Education and Training (VET) system, aiming to support its capacity to open up to internationalization and to access mobility activities, including the participation in European projects with particular reference to Key Action 1 (KA1) Erasmus+ projects.

International mobility and work-based learning are in the heart of the European Union's educational strategy and the essence of the Erasmus+ programme. Until recently, mobilities were considered as an area exclusively accessible by higher education institutes and learners but they are equally important for the VET sector as they are a key element for VET responsiveness to the needs of the labour market and the enhancement of employability of VET graduates. Therefore, the ability of VET staff to design, implement and assess EU mobilities is becoming more and more a crucial asset for VET schools, especially in a country like Albania where VET needs to gain attractiveness towards potential learners.

To accomplish its main goal, MoMAVET project will train a group of representatives of the Albanian National VET Agency, NAVETQ, and 20 VET Teachers from up to 10 VET schools as Mobility Managers at the operational level, following the analysis of the current state of play.

The first step in this process is the definition of a Competence Set that is required for the Mobility Managers which is presented in details in the following sections.

MoMAVET is a 36-month project, funded by Erasmus+ Key Action 2: Capacity Building in VET and is implemented by a partnership of 4 organizations from Italy, Greece and Albania. It has started in January 2023 and will be completed in December 2025.



3. Job profile - Mobility Manager

Despite the concrete steps that a the organization and delivery of an Erasmus+ mobility projects entails, the term "Mobility Manager", identified as a professional who is responsible for the coordination of the whole process, lacks precision and a solid Occupational Profile. Research to numerous EU resources has not provided any indication of the existence of a distinctive profile for the Mobility Manager in an educational setting, let alone in Vocational Education and Training.

To be more specific, there is no registered "Mobility Manager" profile to European Skills Competences and Occupations (ESCO) classification. The closer to the definition of a "Mobility Manager" ESCO profile – at least as conceptualized in this project- is the <u>1345.1.3. Education Programme Coordinator</u>, which, however, fails to reflect the tasks and responsibilities that Mobility Managers are required to perform:

"Education programme coordinators supervise the development and implementation of educational programmes. They develop policies for the promotion of education and manage budgets. They communicate with education facilities to analyse problems and investigate solutions" (ESCO, 2022).

Likewise, there is no specific reference to the term "Mobility Manager" in the documents of EACEA or CEDEFOP. Even though the Erasmus+ internationalization strategies is not a new concept, the respective profile is still in the making – a possible explanation could be that the delivery of the corresponding tasks and responsibilities has been so far conducted by professionals along with their other "routine" duties or by professionals who bear a different title/occupational profile.

In this context, MoMAVET project does not foresee – at least on this stage- the development of a new Occupational Profile - which would possibly require a certification mechanism in place – for Mobility Managers but rather to train already hired VET Teachers who will assume the responsibility to organize mobilities as an additional task in their work.

Traditionally, VET Teachers have been identified as the professionals responsible for the delivery of vocational training according to their specialty and expertise. However, they perform a much more varied range of activities which may be undetected by their learners or the local communities. Apart from remaining abreast with digital and technological advancements within their field of expertise and the requirement of the labour market as well as ethically, mentally or even psychosocially supporting their learners, VET Teachers deal with administrative tasks, especially nowadays as they take over a more complex and multifaceted role.



As a result, following the enhancement of VET studies, both initial and continuing, in Europe in the last 25 years, their role has become much more demanding. Thus, they are now required to develop a range of competences and be involved in numerous other assignments. The below image offers a clear idea on the new tasks which a VET Teacher is now involved in:

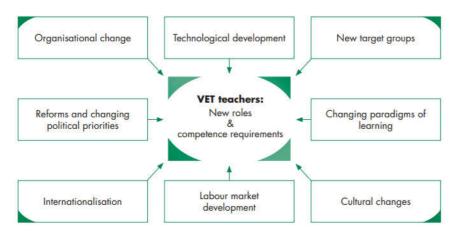


Figure 2. Working context of VET teachers (modified from Cort, Härkönen & Volmari. 2004: 15).

In terms of the internationalization, the VET Teachers need to be aware of the opportunities that are offered for (a) their learners' career and personal development and (b) their own upskilling through the participation in related activities.

Mobility projects is the most common practice of the European Union's internationalization strategy; this is why the project focuses on training at least one VET Teacher in each Albanian VET school to become a focal point for deploying the institute's Erasmus+ mobility strategy.

Due to the lack of a solid profile, we will attempt to provide our own definition, for the purposes of MoMAVET project, based on the tasks and responsibilities that a Mobility Manager is required to perform. Therefore, a VET Mobility Manager is

"a professional who is responsible for (a) <u>launching and monitoring</u> the mobility strategy within a Vocational Education and Training Institute, (b) the <u>planning</u>, <u>preparation</u>, <u>implementation</u> and <u>follow-up</u> of the mobility projects and (c) the reporting to the National Agency.



Based on this definition, which, as highlighted above, follows a backward approach¹, a Competence Set will be developed according to the functions that are encompassed in each distinct phase of the project, as follows:

A. Launching the mobility strategy

• The submission of a mobility proposal for funding or the completion of the accreditation process and the overall communication with the National Agency.

B. Organization and delivery of the mobility project

- <u>Planning</u>: the definition of the content of the activities and the learning objectives, development of the work programme and schedule of the activities
- <u>Preparation</u>: the delivery of practical assignments, including selection of participants, preparation and singing of the respective agreements, linguistic support (when necessary), travelling and accommodation arrangements, debriefing of the planned activities
- Implementation: the actual delivery of the planned activities
- <u>Follow-up</u>: the evaluation, dissemination and exploitation of the delivered activities as well as the validation and formal recognition of the learning outcomes (if applicable).

C. Reporting

 The notification of the National Agency about the implementation of the project, both in technical and financial terms, using the respective templates that are provided by the National Agency according to the rules and principles of the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

As a result, all the competences that are analyzed in the Competence Set below, are fundamental for the effective conduction of all the above steps that will reassure the successful implementation of a mobility project.

¹ With the term "backward approach" we mean that, due to the lack of a concrete Occupational Profile, we tend to describe it based on the functions that a Mobility Manager needs to perform to carry out each component of an Erasmus+ mobility project.



4. Definition of the Competence Set

Following the description of the "Mobility Manager" profile as it is contextualized in the MoMAVET project and in line with the European strategies for mobility projects in VET system, we present an analysis of the Competence Set that the Mobility Managers are required to develop in order to be able to organize and implement these projects efficiently within their VET institutes.

According to ESCO definition, the term "competence" means "the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development". It differentiates from the term "skill" as the later refers mostly "to the use of methods or instruments in a particular setting" while the term "competence" is broader and reflects the "ability of a person to use and apply knowledge and skills in an independent and self-directed way" (ESCO, 2022).

The proposed Competence Set encompasses 10 competence areas that reflect the lifecycle of a mobility project; from its conceptualization and strategic planning until its implementation and follow-up.

As already indicated, the document follows the structure of the ESCO skills pillar which synthesizes the level of knowledge with skills and competences (skills and competences are used interchangeably) that a person should develop in order to declare that (s)he is able to perform certain tasks.

Furthermore, each Competence, in our framework, is analyzed under 3 perspectives which reflect three distinct phases:

- (a) <u>development</u>; the document suggests the most usual (though not exhaustive) way to develop the competence in reference.
- (b) <u>obtainment/consolidation</u>; it highlights the knowledge and skills each competence entails, offering an indirect advice where the VET Teachers need to focus their attention to but also explaining "what the learner will know and will be able to do" after completing the training or acquiring the respective competence.
- (c) <u>assessment</u>; it demonstrates the methods and tools that can be used to assess the level of applicability or efficiency of the respective competence.



To develop the Competence Set, we used multiple sources, including EU reference documents, guidelines and advice from the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)² and the Italian and Greek National Agencies as well as findings, conclusions and lessons learnt from our previous experience in the design, implementation and assessment of mobility projects.

The decision to combine technical expertise through policy documents and experience fits to the project's broader scope: as the main objective of MoMAVET is to train the future Mobility Managers in Albanian VET schools, the selected model for the definition and description of the required Competence Set will enable the partners to easily translate it into Learning Objectives for the development and delivery of a training course that will respond to the VET Teachers' needs during their transition to a new role.

The following chapters illustrate the content of each Competence and will form the Roadmap that will navigate MoMAVET partners and beneficiaries through building a national capacity for Erasmus+ mobility projects.

² Two sources for concrete information on the preparation and management of Erasmus+ KA1 projects are: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-1/what-is-a-mobility-project https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-esc/index/support/guides





Competence 1: Strategy

<u>Development:</u> The competence of strategy can be developed through training in strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, and innovation management.

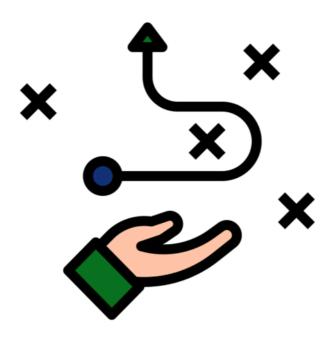
• The mobility manager should also stay <u>up-to-date</u> with trends and best practices in education and training as well as with the European Commission's priorities <u>and key strategies.</u>

Knowledge and Skills: To be effective at strategy, the mobility manager should have knowledge of strategic planning methodologies, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and innovation management practices.

• They should also have skills in <u>analyzing data and trends, identifying priorities</u> and risks, and developing effective action plans.

<u>Assessment:</u> The competence of strategy can be assessed through monitoring the implementation of strategic plans and assessing the effectiveness of action plans.

• They should also <u>seek feedback from stakeholders on the relevance and impact</u> of the strategies developed.





Competence 2: Communication and Dissemination



<u>Development:</u> The competence of communication and dissemination can be developed through a variety of means, such as attending training sessions or workshops on the basic principles of communication practicing effective communication techniques, seeking feedback from colleagues or mentors, and using physical (brochures) or digital tools emails, social media and video conferencing) to enhance communication.

Knowledge and Skills: To be effective at communication, the mobility manager should be able to conduct two level communication: (a) internal communication including with colleagues, partners and the National Agency communication/dissemination, including identifying target audience, selecting key messages, style and channels of communication, design original, engaging and creative content/materials and evaluate the effectiveness of the dissemination strategy). The mobility manager should be aware of the different communication channels (both physical and virtual), their purposes and suitability in different occasions. They should also have the ability to tailor their communication style to different stakeholders, such as students, teachers, or external partners. Finally, they should pay attention to publicly acknowledging European Union funding.

• Skills required for effective communication may include <u>active listening</u>, <u>clear</u> and concise writing and speaking in both English and Albanian, and the ability to convey complex information in a simple manner.

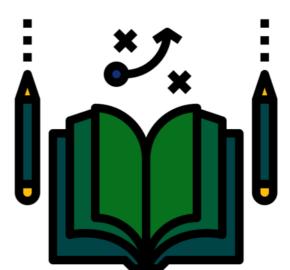
<u>Assessment:</u> The competence of communication can be assessed through a variety of methods, such as peer review, self-assessment, and stakeholder feedback. For example, the mobility manager could request feedback from students or external partners on the clarity and effectiveness of their communication.



Competence 3: Design of mobility projects based on deep knowledge of KA1 context from policy perspective

<u>Development:</u> The competence of design of mobility projects based on deep knowledge of Key Action 1 (KA1) context can be developed through registering into the "Funding and Tenders" portal of the European Union and visiting it on a regular basis, conducting online research, and exchanging information and good practices with other organizations which implement mobility programs.

Knowledge and Skills: To develop a deep knowledge of mobility projects under KA1 context, the mobility manager should become acquainted with the "Funding and Tenders" portal and study in details the Erasmus+ Guide as well as the KA1 calls for applications that are announced by the European Commission. Also, it is important to develop a clear understanding of the priorities, the objectives, the eligibility criteria and the content of KA1 applications to design eligible and successful proposals as well as explore the accreditation process.



Skills required for the organization and implementation of mobilities and KA1
projects encompass very good knowledge of the education and training sector,
proficient level of English language and basic knowledge of EU regulations in the
field of education and training.

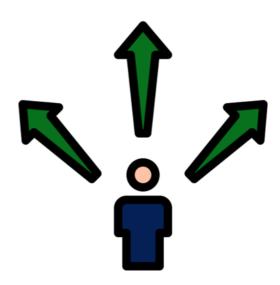
<u>Assessment:</u> The competence of knowledge of mobility and KA1 context can be assessed through monitoring the number and quality of applications submitted and approved by the European Commission as well as the successfulness of the accreditation process.



Competence 4: Partner Search and preparation of mobilities (organization)

<u>Development:</u> The competence of partner search and preparation of mobilities can be developed through attending networking events, conducting online research, and building relationships with relevant stakeholders.

Knowledge and Skills: To be effective at partner search and preparation of mobilities, the mobility manager should have knowledge of the education and training sector, including relevant regulations and guidelines



• They should also have the ability to <u>identify potential partners and assess their suitability for collaboration</u> and develop networking skills to build relationships and maintain the good partnerships. Furthermore, they should be good at communicating their ideas and objectives both internally (their staff members) and externally (their partners) and handling negotiations.

<u>Assessment:</u> The competence of partner search and preparation of mobilities can be assessed through monitoring the number and quality of partnerships formed, assessing the relevance of partners and the content of KA1 projects to the goals of the organization and the priorities of the European Commission, and seeking feedback from stakeholders on the effectiveness of partner search practices.



Competence 5: Time Management

<u>Development:</u> The competence of time management can be developed through preparing well in advance for the submission of an application or report as well as the delivery of an activity, conducting online research for the indicative duration of similar activities, seeking support from more experienced partners.

Knowledge and Skills: To be effective at time management, the mobility manager should, at first, identify the eligible duration of the activities that are funded by the European Commission. Then, they should be able to set an indicative timeline through setting a clear goal, developing a sequence of actions and assigning the designated workforce to deliver them. More importantly, they should prepare the activities well in advance, considering potential problems that may occur.

• Skills that are required for effective time management are punctuality, risk management and problem-solving, prioritization, regular monitoring and supervision/good collaboration among the people who are involved in the delivery of the activities.



Assessment: The competence of time management can be assessed through the timely completion of the activities, the consistency of the actual delivery date of the activities against the original duration/deadlines foreseen on the application or the time management system used by the partner, the National Agency's evaluation and feedback from colleagues, partners and beneficiaries.



Competence 6: Financial Management

<u>Development:</u> The competence of financial management can be developed through training in accounting and budgeting, practical experience in managing finances, and seeking advice from financial experts or mentors. The mobility manager should also stay up-to-date with relevant regulations and guidelines related to financial management.

Knowledge and Skills: To be effective at financial management, the mobility manager should have knowledge of basic accounting principles, budgeting and forecasting techniques, and financial reporting practices.

• They should also have skills in <u>using financial management software and spreadsheets</u>, as well as the ability to <u>analyze financial data and make informed decisions</u>.

Assessment: The competence of financial management can be assessed through monitoring and reporting of financial performance, adherence to budget limits, and achievement of financial targets. The mobility manager could also seek feedback from stakeholders on the effectiveness of financial management practices and use metrics such as financial ratios to assess the organization's financial health.



Competence 7: Human Resources Management

<u>Development:</u> The competence of human resources management can be developed through attending human resources management training seminars and workshops, establishing communication and relationships with beneficiaries, seeking advice from coaches or mentors and asking for feedback from colleagues and supervisors

Knowledge and Skills: To be effective at human resources management, the mobility manager should be able to implement engagement and motivation strategies, have a good understanding of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR 2016/679), and maintain confidentiality.

 They should also have interpersonal skills, empathy, adaptability and the ability to communicate the vision of the organization and the objectives of the mobility activity.



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<u>Assessment:</u> The competence of human resources management can be assessed through feedback from partners and stakeholders

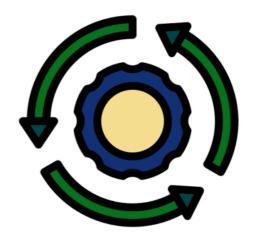


Competence 8: Logistics/administration

<u>Development:</u> The competence of logistics and administration can be developed through training in travel management, accommodation planning, and visa requirements.

Knowledge and Skills: To be effective at logistics, the mobility manager should have knowledge of travel regulations, best practices for requirements, and managing transportation and accommodation. They should also have skills negotiating contracts, managing documentation, and coordinating with external partners.

 The mobility manager should also be familiar with the cultural and social norms of the host country.



<u>Assessment:</u> The competence of logistics can be assessed through monitoring the success of transportation and accommodation arrangements, ensuring compliance with regulations and guidelines, and seeking feedback from participants on the effectiveness of logistics management practices.



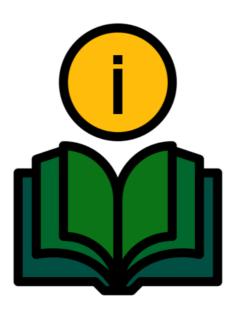
Competence 9: Reporting

<u>Development:</u> The competence of reporting can be developed through studying the templates and the guidelines designed by the European Commission, asking for support from the designated Project Officer or contacting more experienced partners to share their expertise.

<u>Knowledge and Skills:</u> To prepare a well justified report, the mobility manager should have all the requested supporting documents in place (including travel documents, participants' lists, photos etc), be well aware of the activities that were implemented, the timetables, the arrangements and be able to provide the input that is required by the reporting template.

 They should develop the skill to understand which information is important to be included in the report and which documents are required to be submitted as annexes.

<u>Assessment:</u> The competence of reporting can be assessed through the National Agency's evaluation of the Report, feedback from partners and beneficiaries on the effectiveness of the activity.





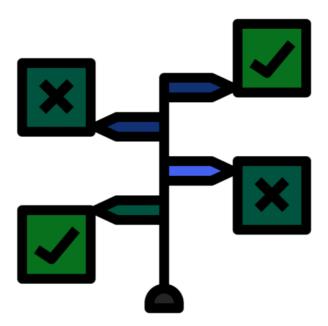
Competence 10: Assessment

<u>Development:</u> The competence of assessment can be developed through training in evaluation methods, monitoring and reporting practices, and the use of data and evidence to inform decision-making.

<u>Knowledge and Skills:</u> To be effective at assessment, the mobility manager should have knowledge of various evaluation methods, such as surveys, focus groups, and interviews, as well as skills in data analysis, report writing, and presentation of findings. They should also be familiar with relevant frameworks and standards for evaluation, such as the EOAVET Framework or the ECVET Recommendation.

• The mobility manager should also be <u>familiar with relevant frameworks and</u> standards for evaluation and assessment.

Assessment: The competence of assessment can be assessed through monitoring and reporting of evaluation activities, use of data and evidence to inform decision-making, and feedback from stakeholders on the effectiveness of assessment practices. The mobility manager could also use metrics, such as response rates to surveys or focus groups, as a way of measuring the impact of their assessment efforts.





5. Criteria for the selection of Mobility Managers (Albanian VET Teachers)

In the table below, we provide a set of mandatory criteria that a VET Teacher should have as prerequisites to be able to apply – and selected - so as to be trained as a Mobility Manager.

These criteria will be used for the assessment of all applicants who will express their interest to become part of MoMAVET pilot activities that will take place in a blended form: (a) online through an asynchronous 10-hours course offered via a training platform and synchronous digital classes and (b) face-to-face through an "in situ" training in IFOA's premises in Reggio Emilia, Italy and a mobility activity in AKMI's premises in Athens, Greece.

Only the VET Teachers who will provenly meet all the below listed criteria will pass the selection round.

Mandatory Criteria	
Employment Contract with a Vocational Education and Training (VET) school	Yes/No
Good understanding of and fluency in English language	Indicate competence on a scale of 1 to 3 (1 - excellent, 3 - good)
Proficiency in the usage of basic IT tools (e-mail, the Internet, word processors, spreadsheets, etc.).	Email, internet, Office package, moodle platform etc.



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